

## ELINOR WONDERS WHY

"Olive's Family Reunion"

OUTLINE - July 31 2019

**Elinor's Question:** Why do we look like some members of our family?

**Logline:** Olive goes to meet some of her extended family, and learns how traits can pass along from parents to their kids.

### Curriculum Goals:

- **LS1c:** Categorize a variety of animals and plants based on their physical characteristics [ They compare how the cousins look similar and different]
- **LS6.** Understand that individuals of the same kind of plant or animal are recognizable as similar but can also vary in many ways: Contrast individuals of the same kinds of plant and animal [ They compare how the cousins look similar and different]
- **SEP1.** Asking questions (science) and defining problems (engineering)
  - b. Ask more complex questions about observable phenomena
  - c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation  
(Elinor and Olive ask questions about why Olive's uncles don't look more like Olive and her mother and plan an investigation)
- **SEP3.** Planning and carrying out investigations
  - a. Identify and use a greater variety of tools to extend the senses for observing, measuring, and recording data about objects and events
  - b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail
  - d. With guidance, plan and conduct simple investigations using simple tools (Elinor and Olive measure and record the size of Olive's uncles' ears and trunk).
- **SEP4.** Analyzing and interpreting data
  - a. Collect, describe, and record observations in greater detail and in various ways
  - c. Record observations to describe patterns and/or relationships in the natural and designed world(s) in order to answer scientific questions and solve

**Commented [1]:**

Top note:

Design assumptions. As you noted below - We need to be careful with how many new character designs we'll be introducing.

We have 6 elephants from interstitial 'dog senses' Some are adults and some kids. Pls reference so we can reuse where possible. It may mean switching up some specifics like 'curly hair' etc.

**Commented [MOU2]:** And not others? Rephrasing the questions a little also allows you to deal with family members that don't look alike as well as non-blood relatives (step, adopted, in-law, etc.)

problems. [\[1\]](#) [\[SEP\]](#)

d. Talk about and reflect on what happened during an investigation or when solving a problem, and why it might have happened (Elinor and Olive discover that children inherit a mix of traits from their parents).

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## 1. OLIVE'S HOUSE - DAY

We open on **Olive** packing her satchel. She's humming and happy, but she has comically too many books for her satchel. She keeps trying to squeeze one more in, but another **one pops out**. Nearby, **Elinor** is looking at a photo album of **Olive's** family. **Wow, says Elinor, you look SO much like your mom.** In the photo album, we see pictures of **Olive** and her mom together, and also pictures of **Olive** next to older pictures of when her mom was her age. They do look alike! **Olive** joins her and confirms that everyone always says the same thing. **They have the same shaped nose, the same sized ears...** She is the spitting image of her mom. **Elinor** comments they also have the same nice smile.

At that moment, **Olive**' mom knocks on the door and asks if the girls are ready to go. **Olive** packs the photo album and says they are almost ready. She tells **Elinor** she is so happy that **Elinor** is coming with her and her family to the **Elephant Family Reunion** today. **Elinor** is going to have so much fun. **Olive** describes the games her family likes to play together: trunk water-shooting contests, sack races, etc. **Elinor** agrees it sounds really fun. **Elinor** says that she sometimes visits her grandparents but hasn't ever been to a **reunion** of the whole family before.

**Olive** says she's especially excited for **Elinor** to meet her uncles. Her mom has three brothers: Lou, Jim and Usain. They are extra fun and cool, and **Olive** can't wait for **Elinor** to meet them. Yay! **Elinor** helps **Olive** squeeze her books into her bag and they are off!

## 2. INT TRAIN - DAY

We see a montage of **Elinor** and **Olive** and her family as they leave the house and head for the train station. In the train, **Olive** and **Elinor** play and giggle as **Mr.** and **Dr.** **Elephant** read. We see them disembark at a **small station** and walk towards a clearing where the **Elephant Family Reunion** is taking place.

## 3. EXT FOREST CLEARING - DAY

**Commented [3]:**  
I suggest we have this take place in her bedroom

**Commented [4]:**  
Her satchel has a zipper at the top so having a book pop out when she pushed another in seems a bit unnatural.

**Commented [AEL5]:** I keep wondering if this is something kids this age would be aware of and comment on? Maybe it needs to say something more like "You look just like what your mom looked like when she was a kid!"

**Commented [6]:**  
Suggest **Elinor** can comment on a photo 'I love your hat in this photo **Olive**' and **Olive** can tell her it's her mom. Then **Elinor** can comment on how much they look alike

**Commented [AEL7]:** Since we are talking about traits – maybe focus on size and shape, for example.

**Commented [MOU8]:** Should this be a herd or parade reunion, since that's a group of elephants?

**Commented [AEL9]:** It's a little odd that **Elinor** would be going with them to an event like this. Maybe her family is away so she has to join **Olive**?

**Commented [NE10R9]:** Probably easier to say that **Olive** was allowed to invite a friend, and she invited **Elinor**.

**Commented [AEL11]:** Will have to unpack this in script.

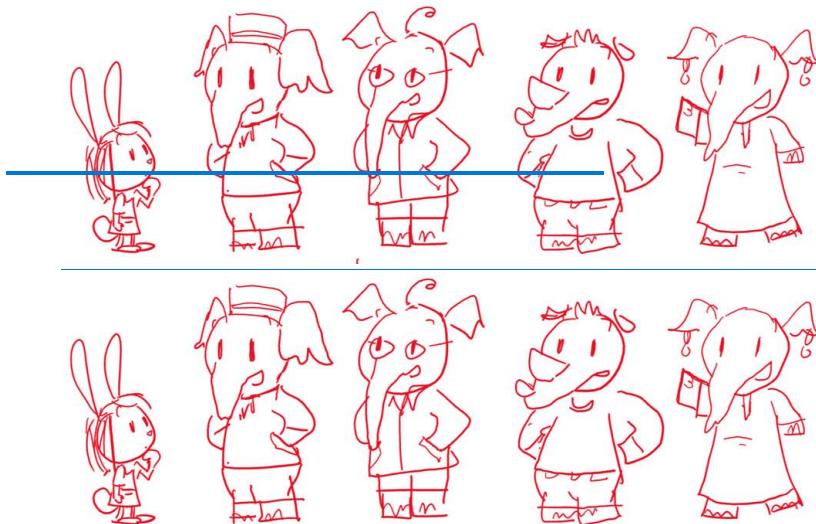
**Commented [12]:**  
To avoid creating a new train station for this one quick shot, suggest we are in tight on train, door is open as they disembark onto a platform.

The group arrives at the Elephant Family Reunion (it's kind of like a big picnic). Wow! Elinor has never seen so many elephants before. There are young elephants, older elephants, elephants of different shapes, shades and sizes, all playing and talking and having fun. Olive's uncles come over to greet them and welcome them to the reunion.

There's Uncle Lou, who is a huge book lover, like Olive. He is always lending books to Olive from his personal library (that's why Olive's bag is stuffed full of books to return). Uncle Lou has an especially long and thin trunk.

There's Uncle Jim, who is very silly, and makes a lot of jokes. Uncle Jim has especially long ears.

Then there's Uncle Usain, who... is a rhinoceros.



Through all of this, Elinor is delighted to see Olive's uncles, but is clearly curious about something. She is especially curious when she sees Uncle Usain.

Olive introduces Elinor, her curious friend, to everyone. Uncle Jim says he's also curious: he wonders what will be served for dinner, and if it's not his favorite banana-shaped pasta, he won't eat it.

**Commented [AEL13]:** I get why you are using this word but it might be tricky to help viewers understand. Maybe we don't have to mention coloration in any way at all and focus on other traits?

**Commented [14]:** Design assumptions. We need to be careful with how many new character designs we'll be introducing.

We have 6 elephants from interstitial 'dog senses' Some are adults and some kids. Pls reference so we can reuse where possible

**Commented [MOU15]:** I may be reading too much into this, but the elephant uncles have plain names like Lou and Jim, while the rhinoceros uncle has a more ethnic name like Usain. I just want to make sure that we're not creating a sense of 'otherness' through his name in addition to his physical differences.

**Commented [AEL16]:** I'm interested in his name too. It's very different from Jim and Lou – more ethnic – is that intentional? If so, why?

After a bit more talk, Olive's parents and her uncles move ahead to greet and talk to other family members. Elinor stays back, thinking about something. She says, "That's so interesting..." Olive thinks Elinor is talking about dinner, but Elinor says that what she finds interesting is that Olive's uncles look really different from what she thought they would. She thought they would look exactly like Olive and her mom, but they don't. "What do you mean?" asks Olive. Well, says Elinor, Uncle Lou has a long and thin trunk, but Olive and her mom's Olive's mom doesn't. And Uncle Jim has really long ears, unlike Olive and her mom. And Uncle Usain, well... he's not an elephant at all! They all look somewhat alike (even Usain has some similarities) but they also have differences even though they are brothers and sister. Why is that? Olive says that she never really noticed, she just thinks of them as her family!

Elinor and Olive decide they need MORE OBSERVATIONS. They head into the Family Reunion to observe her uncles some more.

#### 4. PICNIC AREA - DAY

In an investigative music montage, Elinor and Olive track down Olive's uncles and her mom and look more closely at the traits that set them apart. While Uncle Lou is talking to other elephants, Elinor and Olive surreptitiously study him up close, measuring his trunk using their hands. Then they run over to Olive's mom and compare it to her trunk (and to other nearby elephants' trunks, for good measure). Then they go over to Uncle Jim, who is helping himself to the lunch buffet. Elinor and Olive bring over a chair and climb up to study and measure his long ears, then go back to the mom to compare their measurement. Finally, they track down Uncle Usain, who is about to compete in one of the sack races. They study his small ears, and the two horns he has instead of a trunk. The girls have to finish their observations/measurements on the run, since the sack race started!

The girls reconvene in the middle of the reunion area and recap what they've observed. Uncle Lou does have a thinner and longer trunk than Olive's mom; and Uncle Jim does have longer ears, unlike Olive's mom. And Uncle Usain, he doesn't have a trunk OR big ears. Why do they look so different than Olive and her mom? It's a mystery alright.

**Commented [AEL17]:** The real issue is that they don't look exactly like them, right?

**Commented [AEL18]:** Are we comparing just to Olive's mom or to Olive too?

**Commented [MOU19]:** Like what? Maybe you should list a couple of them to provide context. For example, do you mean similarities like having two eyes, one mouth, and four feet; or like having similar gray skin color and texture?

**Commented [AEL20]:** Maybe more definitive – she just knows that they are all her family.

**Commented [AEL21]:** Could they use a different object/tool to do this measurement? Hands are hard and Olive's hands won't be the same size as Elinor's. Maybe a pencil?

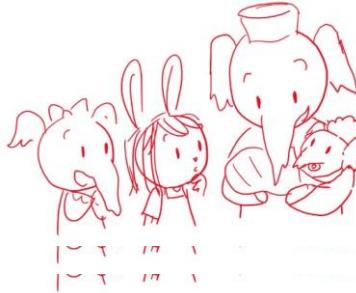
**Commented [22]:** Perhaps we have them come up with a more clever way to measure. Olives trunk? Her notebook?

**Commented [NE23R22]:** Or a book...

**Commented [24]:** I like how they have to be involved in the action taking place to get the info needed. Perhaps this can happen throughout

At that moment, Uncle Jim walks over to them. He's finished eating and is now holding a baby elephant. Look who just woke up from her nap. He introduces Olive to her newest cousin, little baby Rose, his daughter. Olive is amazed and super excited to meet her. Aww, she's so cute! Little Rose has long ears and curly hair. Olive notes that she looks a lot like Uncle Jim. Yes, he says, little Rose has long ears, just like her daddy. Olive also loves her curly hair. Uncle Jim says that Rose got that from her mother. Little Rose's mom then walks up, and we see that she has a big head of curly hair. Elinor is curious. She asks Uncle Jim what he meant when he said Rose got her ears from him and her hair from her mom. Uncle Jim explains that everyone gets different traits (those are the features and characteristics things that make you who you are, like your nose or your ears or your hair) from their parents. Sometimes you get a mix of them from both parents, and sometimes you get most of them from only one parent. For example, his other daughter Kathy has his ears like his, but she doesn't have curly hair like her mom her mom's curly hair. Kathy peeks from behind her mom (she's a toddler elephant). Or like Olive, who has a lot of traits that make her look mostly like her mom. Ohhh...

At this, Elinor has a realization. She asks Olive if she can look at her family photo album again, and if she has a picture of her grandparents. Olive says she does and finds a photo of her two grandparents with their four kids (Olive's mom and her three uncles). Elinor and Olive study the photo and make a few connections: They see the pattern! Olive's Uncle Lou has a long nose like his mother (Olive's grandma). Uncle Jim has big ears like his father (Olive's grandpa). They understand that we all get some traits from one or both of our parents. But wait, what about Uncle Usain? Uncle Usain explains that he is adopted. He got his traits from his rhinoceros parents, but when they couldn't take care of him, Olive's grandparents took care of him and became his parents. Uncle Lou chimes in: He doesn't look like an elephant, but he's our brother! Family means more than just looking the same.



**Commented [AEL25]:** Do we have to worry at all regarding accuracy of the science of elephants and their traits? I know these are anthropomorphized but we are focused on elephant traits, and curly hair would not be one of those traits.

**Commented [AEL26]:** Need help from Sara to define "traits"

**Commented [AEL27]:** This is tricky to explain without leaving a lot out. And the definition of parents that kids understand might not be a biological one. So it's tricky and we will really need help from Sara to get this right. I'm not sure it's right yet. (I also think we need to be careful using language like "her father's ears" because they are really ears that look like her father's.)

**Commented [NE28R27]:** Agree... feels like we might want to set up the idea of what's inherited genetically earlier on in the story, too.

**Commented [MOU29]:** What does this mean? Were his parents killed, did they abandon him, was he separated from his parents, etc.? We should be careful not to paint the picture that Usain's parents were unfit or unable to take care of him and so the elephants 'rescued' him from his incapable parents. I realize this sounds crazy since we're talking about elephants and rhinos ☺

**Commented [AEL30]:** So we just summed up adoption in one sentence. This doesn't seem like enough and I still wonder if adoption is better left to another story. I just feel like we can't deal with the idea of "when they couldn't take care of him" in a meaningful way. It's a very loaded subject that I think warrants more thinking and discussion.

**Commented [AEL31]:** I think we need to say much more about this and not just in a song.

## 5. SONG MONTAGE

Elinor and Olive sing a song as they walk around and appreciate the diversity of different elephant shapes, shades and traits:

Families play  
And families eat  
They gather together  
And share a treat

Sometimes you look  
Like your mother  
And have a nose like your  
sister or brother

Sometimes you look  
Like your father  
And maybe your ears  
Are a little bit larger

Sometimes you look  
Like nobody else  
You can be the only one  
Who looks like yourself

Families love  
And help each other  
Mothers and fathers  
Sisters and brothers

## 6. PICNIC AREA -- DAY

After the song, Olive and Elinor are back where Olive's family had gathered. Elinor recaps what they learned: how we are all different and special because we get different traits from each of our parents. Uncle Lou asks if Elinor and Olive are ready to go play some games now. Yes! Olive grabs Kathy's hand and tells Elinor she can't wait for Elinor to meet her other cousins. Elinor is so glad she came. She feels like she gets to be an "elephant for a day"! Uncle Lou tells her she's the most curious elephant he ever met. She's part of the family now! On laughter and giggles, we see Elinor and Olive head into the reunion to play as we...

**Commented [AEL32]:** I keep thinking about kids who don't know who their parents are – these are the kids who might be adopted. How do we deal with that in a sensitive way?

**Commented [NE33R32]:** Or kids who didn't grow up with one (or both) parents at home.

**Commented [MOU34]:** I think it would be better for the uncles to acknowledge that Elinor is different (rabbit), and they can still see her as part of their 'family'. This delivers that message that you can be yourself and not 'an elephant for a day.'

END

(DESIGN NOTE: If this is feeling design-heavy, here are some alts: Olive and her family can walk to the reunion instead of taking the train. The reunion can take place in the same spot as the Town Picnic. The picnic can be a modest affair, and re-use/re-mix some of the elephants from the dog smell interstitials?).

**Sara Sweetman Notes:**

*My only note is that when this moves to script not to get too tied up in too much detail about the differences. I like that it shows how the brothers are the "same" and "different"...but we don't want too many observations that it is hard for a 4-5 year old to hold onto in their head.*

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